Editor-in-Chief Message

MANY of you may have known that I will retire from the Editor-in-Chief (EiC) position at the end of this year. Now it's time for me to say goodbye. I can hardly believe that almost four years have passed since I assumed the EiC position of IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS FOR VIDEO TECHNOLOGY (TCSVT) on January 1, 2020. I really appreciated the diligent services and valuable contributions from our entire editorial board, the dedicated reviewers, and the IEEE CASS publication offices. In particular, I thank our three Deputy or Associated EiCs, Prof. Wenwu Zhu (2020–2021), Prof. Li Zhu (2020–2023), and Prof. Vladimir Stankovic (2022–2023), for their fullhearted supports on digital media, special issue organization etc. Of course, I'd like to also thank CASS VP publication for his support on the guidance and page budget.

Here I would also like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome the next Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Wenwu Zhu, from Tsinghua University. Wenwu had been serving as the EiC for IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON MULTIMEDIA (TMM) from January 2017 to December 2019, the Deputy EiC of the TCSVT from January 2020 to December 2021. Based on his many years of experience and leadership in the IEEE TRANSACTIONS community, I have the full confidence that he will bring the TCSVT to the next level!

It's indeed four exciting years for me! TCSVT has witnessed healthy growth in almost all facets and we together make TCSVT's impact factor (IF) reached a new historic level, 8.4! So please allow me to take a moment to recap some of the major developments of the Transaction and share some of my thoughts moving forward.

First of all, I would like thank again to our outstanding TCSVT Editorial Board. The number of total Associate Editors (i.e., AE) in the past four years are 75, 107, 109, and 118, respectively. Although the number of AEs in year 2023 were increased by 57% compared to year 2020, the number of paper submissions has increased even more rapidly in the past four years, which are 1,600, 2,555, 3,693, and 4,800+. It means that compared to the submission number 1214 in year 2019, the submissions in 2023 have actually increased by 300%! It posed a very heavy workload on each AE: handled an average of 45 assignments per year. Thanks to our members of the Editorial Board for their hard work, most AEs handled their assignments in a timely and professional manner.

It is worth mentioning that although we had a dramatic increase in paper submissions, the paper review turnaround time has still been steadily decreasing. The reviewing periods in the S1M system are further optimized and shortened. The

longest time from the paper submission to the final decision is significantly reduced from the original 30 weeks to the current 19 weeks, resulted in a total reduction of 11 weeks. This is achieved by an administrator hired by the EiC and she helped monitor the reviewing process and send reminders to AEs when they passed the timeline.

In more details, for accepted papers, the average time in months from submission to 1st review: 1.65 in 2019, 1.29 in 2020, 0.98 in 2021, 0.89 in 2022, and 0.98 in 2023. The time in the year 2023 is only 59.4% of the time in the year 2019. The average time in months from submission to final decision: 6.45 in 2019, 4.75 in 2020, 4.45 in 2021, 4.15 in 2022, and 4.67 in 2023. The time in year 2023 is only 72.4% of the time in the year 2019. For rejected papers, the average time in months from submission to final decision: 2.94 in 2019, 2.34 in 2020, 2.15 in 2021, 1.94 in 2022, and 2.26 in 2023. Again, the time in the year 2023 is only 76.9% of the time in year 2019. Such improvements have set our CSVT total paper review time more competitive against most top AI and Multimedia conferences and attract more and more researchers to publish their original work on our CSVT.

Based on above mentioned improvements, we have therefore reduced the backlog significantly. For papers published (in print), the average time in months: 20.59 in 2019, 19.69 in 2020, 14.94 in 2021, 12.73 in 2022, and 11.14 in 2023. The backlog in year 2023 is only 54.1% of the backlog in year 2019. Thanks to the VP publication of IEEE CASS, the page budget has also been increased from 3600 to 5000 in 2020, from 4100 to 5000 in 2021, from 5500 to 8945 in 2022, and from 6150 to 8000 in 2023. However, in view of the current large amount of paper submissions, the backlog is still about nine months, according to 8000 pages per year, which may require a further reduction on the acceptance rate. Kindly note that it may be a bit difficult to have a further increase on paper budget because currently each issue has already contained more than 660 pages.

Special sections are very important to create the big impact of the Transaction. In 2020, the EiC led the Editorial Board and organized six special sections with an additional increased budget of 1400 pages. Since 2021, we selected and approved 2–3 special sections organized by the senior Editorial Board members every year. In particular, the EiC invited to organize "Video Transformer," "AIGC for Multimedia," and "Segment Anything" three special sections which cover various hot topics in multimedia and video areas. From 2020 to date, we have totally published seven special sections in 2020, three special sections in 2021, three special sections in 2022, one special sections in 2023, three special sections are in progress, and two newly approved special sections this year.

With the joint efforts from our whole team, we proudly see that the CSVT has become one of the flagship journals in the areas of videos. We are very glad to share that in past four years, the IF of TCSVT has made steady advance toward a new level: 4.133 in 2019, 4.685 in 2020, 5.859 in 2021, and 8.400 in 2022. In addition, the number of citations has also grown up to a historic level.

Finally, I would like to share some personal thoughts. Firstly, we should further lower down the acceptance rate of TCSVT. The target acceptance rate should be below 20%, currently it is around 24%. The current huge submission number could be a basis for further acceptance rate reduction. Secondly, given the fact that the Asia–Pacific region has the largest Research and Development population and the fastest growing economy, currently there are much more AEs and paper submissions from the Asia–Pacific regions than other regions. Therefore, it could be necessary to reduce the number of AEs in the Asia–Pacific region and attract more papers from other global regions to make our journal more balanced. The good thing is that our high IF factor could have the potential to attract more high-quality papers from other regions.

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